

R¹ is

- a) when z is 1 or 2: hydrogen, alkyl of 1 to 18 carbon atoms or HOCH₂CH₂,
b) when z is 2: additionally OH, and
c) when z is 1: either as defined under a) independently for the two R¹ radicals or as defined under a) in one instance and as defined under b) in the other,

R² and R³, which may be the same or different, are each hydrogen or alkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms subject to the proviso that together they have not more than 4 carbon atoms, and

M is one equivalent of a mono- or divalent metal atom,

at pH 4 - 7, optionally followed by an aftertreatment with hydrogen peroxide.

3. (Amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, utilizing mixtures of compounds of the formula I where the z indices have different meanings, where R¹, R², R³, z and M are each as defined above and the molar ratio of sulfur-containing compounds to nitrogen-containing compounds is in the range from 0.2 to 1.1.

5. (Amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the textile material is additionally treated with one or more further assistants selected from the group consisting of backstain inhibitors and/or dispersants and/or surfactants.

11. (Amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein in the compounds the z indices have different meanings for preparing discharge prints.

Please add the following Claims 12-14:

12. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the textile material is a denim fabric.

13. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, which is followed by an aftertreatment with hydrogen peroxide.

14. (New) A process as claimed in claim 3, wherein in the mixtures the various compounds are mixtures in which the various compounds are present in that ratio which corresponds to their equilibrium concentration in an aqueous system of compounds of the formula I, the amine or the hydroxylamine of the formula $R^1_{3-z}NH_z$.

Please cancel Claims 9 and 10.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

The claims have been amended in a manner solely to overcome their asserted indefiniteness and objection. Specifically, the criticized parentheses have been deleted, the preferred embodiments of the process have been set out in separate dependent claims, and in claim 11 a specific process step is now recited. No new matter has been introduced thereby.

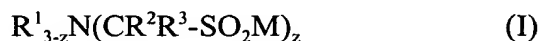
REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claims 1-8 and 11-14 are in the case.

The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) or § 103(a) over Beckman et al, as well as under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fono in view of Beckman et al.

The invention relates to a process for controlled partial decolorization of vat- or sulfur-dyed or -printed textile material, which comprises treating the textile material to be lightened or de-colored with one or more compounds of the formula I



where

z is 1, 2 or 3,

R^1 is